

over China and that part of Asia. Oswald's anti-aircraft unit, highly classified with regard to security, had the specific assignment of guarding a U-2 hangar and was surrounded by a high, heavily wired Page fence. Even the arrival of the daily mail truck required that it be preceded by a sergeant on foot, equipped with the password for the day.<sup>17</sup> His service at Atsugi Air Base is probably best memorialized by two of the many Central Intelligence Agency documents concerning him which were classified as unavailable following the Warren Commission inquiry: CD 931 "Oswald's access to information about the U-2" and CD 692 "Reproduction of C.I.A. official dossier on Oswald."<sup>18</sup>

Another indication of the peculiar security status which Oswald had acquired in the Marines has been well concealed from casual view. The island of Quemoy, just off the mainland of communist China, was occupied by the nationalist Chinese - allies of the United States - but was within shelling distance of the red Chinese. Periodically, a crisis surfaced when Quemoy was shelled and threatened by possible invasion from the mainland. During one of these occasions Oswald was assigned to duty on Quemoy - but the assignment apparently was of a high security classification because it was not indicated anywhere in his service record made available to the Warren Commission.

This special mission was discovered later by a non-government investigator who undertook the laborious task of going through Oswald's payroll records and discovered the fact of his unlisted presence in Quemoy. Oswald was a trained specialist in radar and anti-aircraft operations and it would appear that this special assignment was in that connection. It is not known with any certitude, however, because the purpose of his special assignment has been kept secret.<sup>19</sup>

It was not long after taking the Russian examination at El Toro that Lee Oswald received his discharge from the Marines. Within two weeks he surfaced in Moscow where he ostentatiously announced that he had "defected" from the United States and remained for 30 months before returning. What is important to keep in mind is that it was only at this time in Moscow that the scenario of Oswald as a "Communist" - later to be so advantageous in making him the scapegoat for the assassination - began. However, the overwhelming weight of the evidence makes it clear that back in his Marine days - even while he was being taught Russian - he had not the slightest inclination towards Communism.

It is hard to avoid becoming curious about Kerry Thornley whose extravagant testimony differed so enormously from all the other Marines who served with Oswald. It mattered not how

numerous and unanimous the others were about the total absence of Marxist leanings on Oswald's part -- it was Thornley's testimony which was grabbed and held high, for all to see, by the Warren Commission and the government, the incurious national press and the writers of obsequious books approving the official travesty.

Strangely enough, Nelson Delgado -- who had lived in the same barracks as Oswald and had known him much longer (and had "never heard Oswald say subversive things") -- was not even given the usual 72 hours' notice before being called to testify.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Thornley was given six months in advance, remaining in the Washington, D.C. area, while he prepared to testify for the government.

He arrived in Washington promptly after the assassination of the President and stayed there until his lengthy testimony for the Warren Commission in May of the following year. Whatever lay behind it, Thornley's testimony stands out as most singular -- almost as discordant as the government's triumphant and publicized seizure of it (in the face of the heavy weight of evidence to the contrary) as evidence that Lee Oswald was a dedicated Marxist revolutionary.

It should be noted that when Oswald left El Toro, where he had been given examinations in Russian, he was given an honorable discharge.\* His departure for Europe followed promptly (his Lykes Steamship ticket was obtained at the Lykes office of New Orleans' International Trade Mart, managed by Clay Shaw). Although he sailed to England, it is known that he departed eastward by air. However, a mystery still exists as to what kind of air service was made available to him. His departure from the London airport was stamped with the date of 10 October 1959. He arrived in Finland that evening, and checked into his hotel some hours before the arrival of the first commercial air liner on that day.<sup>21</sup> Under the circumstances, it is highly unlikely that his flight to Finland was made aboard any commercial airliner.

Lee Oswald's departure for Russia was made with State Department approval, according to Health, Education and Welfare Department records in Dallas, to work as a radar specialist.<sup>22</sup> A former C.I.A. finance officer, in a statement made in 1978, has been even more specific. Oswald, he stated under oath, had been recruited from the military by the C.I.A. "with the express

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\*The dishonorable discharge did not occur until he had arrived in Russia and announced that he had "defected". In retrospect, that action appears to have been the creation of a standard intelligence "funny", intended to add verisimilitude to a mission. However, Lee Oswald, upon his return to the United States, filed a strong formal complaint about the change made in his discharge from the Marines.



purpose of a double agent assignment in the U.S.S.R."\*

The Agency, has been exceedingly modest about Oswald's possible intelligence assignment in the Soviet Union, its position being -- quite understandably -- that he was not employed by the Agency. However, even if he had not been the patsy for Kennedy's elimination, that would be its standard position with regard to any employee executing such an intelligence assignment.

The former air defense technician in the Marines might well have had an assignment connected with the visibility of U-2 overflights (and the consequent contrails left by the hot engines in the cold upper atmosphere). In that connection, an examination of external occurrences, related in time with Oswald's departure from Russia, reveals that the arrangements for his return to the United States were made at approximately the

\*From the former C.I.A. employee's testimony before the House Committee on Assassinations. This employee, a paymaster, testified that he had handled the funding for the project to which Oswald had been assigned. Disposing of this problem, however, was duck soup for the Agency. A chorus line of other Agency witnesses, whose names he had mentioned, was produced and they smoothly denied all knowledge of such a thing. The members of the Committee lost interest in the lead and turned their minds to livelier leads such as Castro's revenge.<sup>23</sup> The observation must be made that nothing seemed to interest the Committee's higher investigative staff less than the production of information connecting the C.I.A. with Lee Oswald.

same time that the United States launched the Midas, the satellite observer missile, to overfly Russia on a regular basis.<sup>24</sup> With the satellite observer taking over and replacing the U-2 overflights, there would no longer have been any need for a ground observer to see whether or not visible contrails were left by hot airplane engines.\*

The Agency's name rarely appears on the record for anything it initiates which is in the slightest respect sensitive. For example, if it wants a man transferred from one place to another, it arranges behind the scenes for Bureau X to request Bureau Y to make the transfer. After the mission is accomplished, even though the Agency was its "sponsor"\*, there remains nothing on the record to show that any interest on its part ever existed.

This point is made because, in connection with Lee Oswald's trip to Russia and back, there is a pattern of government help for him rather than opposition to him. This is all the more unprecedented when such special solicitude is observed occurring after his incendiary announcement in Russia - at a press

\*This is not intended as a probability estimate of Oswald's precise function while in the Soviet Union because insufficient data has been made available for such an estimate. It is, however, intended as an example of the fact that he was not without potential utility to the United States Intelligence Community.

\*\*Customary Intelligence Community terminology for the primary instigator or supporter of a mission.

conference which he called at his Moscow hotel - that he was "defecting" from the United States, that he believed in Marxism and that he not only was going to remain in Russia but that, because of his experience in radar, he was in possession of military secrets which he was going to turn over to the Soviet government.

As this dramatic defection hit the world media, the F.B.I. duly picked it up. The Bureau, after making a study of Oswald's Marine Corps files, stated that "no derogatory information was contained in the U.S.M.C. files concerning Oswald."<sup>25</sup> The Bureau further was informed that the Office of Naval Intelligence contemplated no action against him in the matter.<sup>26</sup> Concerning the F.B.I.'s failure to investigate the Oswald "defection" any farther, J. Edgar Hoover later stated that the American Embassy in Moscow had given Oswald a "clean bill."<sup>27</sup>

A close study of the record reveals that - after his 30 month sojourn in Russia was over - Oswald once again received the same peculiarly preferential treatment from the United States government with regard to his return to the United States. The special treatment did not extrude. Its profile was sufficiently low so as not to catch the eyes of the media. But it was there.

It is noteworthy, for example, that when Lee Oswald prepared to return from Russia the State Department approved his return (it could have opposed his return as a defector).<sup>\*</sup> It authorized the American Embassy in Moscow to lend him the money (in behalf of State) for his return.<sup>29</sup> It is also noteworthy that a State Department regulation provides that such a repatriation loan cannot be made unless "loyalty to the United States beyond question" has been established with regard to the recipient.<sup>30</sup> The State Department's Passport Office found "no reason" why his passport should not be renewed\*\* and the Department authorized the American Embassy to renew it.<sup>31</sup> (In fact subsequently, in 1963, when he applied for his passport again, he received it within 24 hours<sup>32</sup> - a circumstance which would have been utterly impossible had his "defection" to Russia been genuine).

This governmental pattern demonstrating almost paternal solicitude for Lee Oswald's welfare - following his fiery "defection" in Moscow, and, 30 months later, following his return

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\*The Department's report stated that it had determined that Oswald "had not expatriated himself" by his actions upon arriving in Russia in 1961. It added that there was no indication in the reports on Oswald sent to the Department by the F.B.I. that Oswald was a communist.<sup>28</sup>

\*\*Ordinarily, when an American citizen goes abroad and commits an act indicating allegiance to another country (such as the Soviet Union) the Passport Office automatically prepares a "lookout" card to catch its attention in the event the party ever attempts to review his passport. In Oswald's case, no such "lookout" card ever was prepared. Like the American Embassy, the Passport Office gave Oswald a "clean bill of health."

to the United States - is quite perceptible, upon close analysis, to one even unconnected with the government. The governmental sponsors of the assassination, consequently, must have been acutely conscious of it.

This would seem to explain their felt need, which otherwise would have been redundant and unnecessary, to backdate his apparent Marxism all the way to El Toro Marine Base in 1959 - a remarkable feat which was accomplished by producing a witness to testify before the members of the Warren Commission concerning his radical tendencies even back then. This crucial stain (which had the effect of inferring that the Russian adventure was but a continuation of a deep seated radical dementia, rather than a possible government mission assigned to him) was held up high for the media to see by its presentation before the Commission itself. This darkly incriminating testimony was printed in Volume XI of the hearings.

On the other hand, the other Marines, who had served more closely with Oswald and had known him longer in the Marines, unanimously testified that they never had observed any radical tendencies whatsoever (Oswald "never said subversive things"... "He would discuss his ideas but not anything against

our Government or -- nothing Socialist, mind you"... "I never heard him in any way, shape or form confess that he was a Communist, or that he ever thought about being a Communist"... "I never heard Oswald make any anti-American or pro-Communist statements"... "Oswald never gave me any indication of favoring Communism or opposing capitalism"... "I do not recall any remarks on his part concerning Communism, Russia or Cuba"... are some of the examples cited earlier herein of the consensus of his former Marine associates). This material, consisting of depositions and affidavits - in contrast to the inciting and incriminating testimony presented openly before the members of the Commission - was bunched in a separate volume of the Warren Report from Thornley's testimony and it appears unlikely that most, if any, of the Commission members ever saw it.

Oswald was met on his arrival in New York not by the F.B.I. nor any other law enforcement agencies but by Spas T. Raikin, who was the secretary-general of the American Friends of the Anti-Bolshevik Nations, Inc., an anti-Communist operation with extensive intelligence connections. No effort ever was made by the government to prosecute Oswald for his alleged defection. To the contrary, as will be seen in the following chapter, when he ultimately moved from Fort Worth to Dallas he was received with open arms by the ferociously anti-communist White Russian



community in Dallas and by the United States government, as well. Pending more detailed consideration in the following chapter, a single incident will suffice here as an illustration.

Learning the real status of a defector - who later became a re-defector - can be relatively simple. Simply find out what their standing is with the local F.B.I. office. The Bureau, whose agents are trained to sniff out a Communist a thousand yards away, does not equivocate on that subject.

Of the number of Dallas anti-communist Russians welcoming the Oswalds, only Anna and Teofil Meller had any serious reservations about the couple. This was because Anna, while visiting the Oswald's apartment, had seen a copy of Karl Marx' "Das Kapital" on a table. She seems to have been unaware of it but Teofil, her husband, later called the Bureau and reported the fact. He was informed by the Bureau's spokesman that Oswald was alright.

This information was obtained from a Dallas police investigative report dated February 17, 1964, captioned "Teofil Meller."\* How one might ask, was the fact that on this occasion the Bureau regarded Oswald as "alright" handled by the Warren Commission - considering that the latter by that date had begun

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\*It was obtained by researcher Harold Weisberg, one of the most indefatigable critics of the "official solution". See his book, Whitewash II (New York, Dell, 1966), pp. 45-50.



its project of converting Oswald into a reptile more deadly than the King Cobra?

The Warren Commission handled this problem with its usual elan. It simply did not call Teofil Meller as a witness - nor even ask him for an affidavit.

In view of such an accumulation of considerable anomalies, one is tempted to want to examine Oswald's income tax for the period in question in order to see if income was reported by him from the C.I.A., Naval Intelligence or a related government bureau. Unfortunately for that thought, Oswald's income tax for the relevant time period has been classified as secret.<sup>33</sup> Lee Oswald is probably the only lonely, itinerant drifter in the history of the human race to have his income tax return classified as secret for reasons of national security.

The next chapter will demonstrate in particular - and following chapters will reinforce - that Oswald's treatment, following his return, both by the Intelligence Community and by dedicated anti-Communist individuals unquestionably supports the conclusion that in Russia he had been engaged in a government intelligence clandestine mission (as his mother attempted to

inform federal officials in vain as far back as 1961<sup>34</sup>). The facts support the conclusion that Oswald actually was anything but a real defector. It follows that a number of men high in the American Intelligence Community, despite their silence since, necessarily would have been well aware of this.

In any case, those same individuals therefore would know, as well, of the uniqueness of a young American who had branded himself a dissident Marxist in the eyes of the world and who ultimately would be returning to the United States, where he necessarily would continue to be responsive to their orders.

Oswald would return to Texas in 1962, leaving in the summer of 1963 to spend the summer in New Orleans. There he would be "sheep dipped"\* - under the cold eyes of Guy Banister, the former

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\*"Sheep dipped" is intelligence terminology for placing an individual in a form of activity which will condition him in a particular way in the public eye. In 1962, following his return to Russia, Oswald had been surrounded by markedly anti-Communist Russian exiles in Dallas so that, with the assassination coming up later in 1963, it was necessary to cause him to go through some "refresher" motions (e.g. handing out pro-Castro leaflets on the street in front of news photographers, who had been called beforehand) so that the public could be reminded, at the proper time, that he was a trouble maker who had once "defected" to Russia. It would not have been difficult for the older men around him in New Orleans to induce him to such action by convincing him that he was helping to "penetrate" the pro-Castro group (which actually had no members in New Orleans) known as "Fair Play for Cuba," headquarters which was in New York.

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Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago F.B.I. office and a member of ~~Naval Intelligence in World War II~~ - by being instructed to hand out pro-Castro leaflets in the streets of New Orleans and engage in other dissident antics.<sup>35</sup>

### The Lure of Louisiana

Kerry Thornley - the young man who would one day be the government's star witness against his former Marine friend - was a native of California, having gone to high school in Whittier and then to the University of Southern California. In January, 1961 - the month of President Kennedy's inauguration - he moved to New Orleans, Lee Oswald's hometown (prior to his moving to Fort Worth when in high school) where he was to remain for several years and the very place where Oswald would be returning to hand out inflammatory pro-Castro pamphlets in the summer before the assassination.<sup>36</sup>

Oswald, meanwhile, was in the midst of his 30 month stay in Russia, an ostensible defector working in a radio factory in Minsk.\* He would not be back in New Orleans until he arrived to

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\*Minsk was one of six cities to which the Russians automatically sent defectors arriving from other countries. Whatever Oswald's assigned mission was, consequently, it was predictable in advance that the Soviets would assign him to one of these six cities.

spend the summer there in 1963.

Thornley, when questioned by the New Orleans District Attorney's Office, denied having encountered Oswald in New Orleans during the latter's 1963 sojourn back in the city, although witness Barbara Reid strenuously disagreed with this. She described in great detail seeing them together on several occasions at the Bourbon House, a combination bar and restaurant in the French Quarter.<sup>37</sup>

For Thornley the lure of Louisiana suddenly ended several days after Kennedy's assassination. At that time he permanently left New Orleans. He abruptly departed (as he explained in a hasty note left for his landlord) "for the Washington, D.C. area."<sup>38</sup>

Where, Thornley was asked, had he stayed while living in New Orleans? As chance would have it, he had resided for a time on Lafayette Square - the highly active center, although low in its profile, for the Intelligence Community's operations in New Orleans in the early 1960's.\* This was learned when he was asked why he had had a box key for the Lafayette Square post office (it was not known that he had one, but it earlier had become apparent

\*See Chapter 7, ~~THE LAFAYETTE COMPLEX~~.

BACKSLASH APPROPRIATE

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that all the intelligence employees at Guy Banister's clandestine operation - later including Lee Oswald in the summer of 1963 - carried such a key, apparently either for receiving instructions in their mail box from their particular intelligence case agents or for an explanation of their periodic presence in the building in which the Office of Naval Intelligence was located). Thornley's answer was that he had possessed such a key because he had lived at the Fox Hotel right across the street from the post office building.<sup>39</sup>

Right across the street? Mirabile dictu! And right across the street from Guy Banister (the former career intelligence official and now the man running the anti-Castro effort for the Cuban emigres in New Orleans).<sup>\*</sup> And right across the street from the hang-out of David Ferrie (the peripatetic C.I.A. contract employee and Oswald's former captain in the Civil Air Patrol).<sup>41</sup> And right across the street from 544 Camp Street, from which in the summer of 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald, would be handing out his provocative "pro-Castro" leaflets.<sup>42</sup>

And right across the street from Naval Intelligence headquarters.<sup>43</sup> And two blocks down the street from the Central Intelligence Agency and the F.B.I. offices.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>See Chapter 7, ~~THE LAFAYETTE COMPLEX~~.<sup>40</sup>

*Banister Apparatus*

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Here the point should be made that in dealing with an Intelligence Community product (such as, to a degree, is represented by the twenty-six volumes of "hearings and evidence" of the Warren Commission) it is not merely enough -- no matter how scholarly the effort -- to confine one's study to that highly selective product. There must also be some primary investigation to develop reference points connecting with exterior reality. For example, not a trace of the content of the material being presented in this chapter would be found anywhere in the twenty-six volumes of the government's investigation - aside from the briefly cited effort of government attorneys to portray the officially selected scapegoat as a "Marxist."

Of course, Kerry Thornley's presence in the middle of the crowded Lafayette Square intelligence scene might have been the purest happenstance. It is nevertheless notable that federal investigators seem to have shown no interest in nor any awareness of the coincidences involved in his presence in New Orleans, his contacts there and the timing of his arrivals and departures from the city.

Another small eyebrow raiser, as well, is the fact that, while living in New Orleans, Kerry Thornley had been writing a novel "inspired by" Lee Oswald (he finished the book in February 1963 -- just eight months before the assassination).<sup>45</sup> Not



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many other people were writing books inspired by Lee Oswald. At least, not before the murder of President Kennedy.

The D.A.'s office already had learned that Thornley arrived in New Orleans in early 1961. A routine check of police records shows that he was in New Orleans in 1962, as well. He was arrested in August of that year for putting a sign on a telephone post on Royal Street, in the French Quarter, in violation of a city ordinance.<sup>46</sup> The arresting police officers, when questioned, could no longer recall the subject of the sign.

Thornley's arrival in New Orleans in January of 1961 could turn out to be the explanation of the previously unexplainable "Bolton Ford incident."<sup>47</sup> While Oswald was still in Russia, a young man (initiating a bid for ten Ford pick-up trucks for the C.I.A.-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion) gave his name to the Bolton Ford company as "Lee Oswald".\*

The bid was being made by this "Oswald" in behalf of Guy Banister's "Citizens for a Democratic Cuba." The proposed

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\*Oswald's name, quite apparently, was on the bid form which the F.B.I. agents -- following the assassination -- so carefully removed with tweezers from the Bolton Ford files. Although Thornley must have arrived in Washington almost as soon as the bid form, there is no indication in the twenty-six Warren Commission volumes that anyone ever asked him about that -- or about the number of other instances of the use of Oswald's name by a young man.

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transaction was occurring at a time when this organization was engaged in gathering material for the C.I.A.'s attempted invasion at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. This indirect procedure was being used to acquire military equipment for the invasion in order to support the posture - later adopted by the United States government - that the invasion had been developed and launched solely by anti-Castro Cubans. At the time of the bid, the young man using Oswald's name told the Ford people, "You ought to sell us these trucks at cost. This is for a patriotic thing."<sup>48</sup>

The young man using Oswald's name was accompanied by a husky character who appeared to be Latin and who had a distinctive one inch vertical scar through his left eyebrow. The powerful looking Latin would later be seen regularly at another operation out of Banister's place. After the real Lee Oswald's return to New Orleans in the summer of 1963, when he began flamboyantly handing out the pro-Castro leaflets, the man with the scar would always be present on the edge of the crowd - out of range of the cameras - as his bodyguard.\*

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\*This is standard operating procedure for intelligence when an employee or agent is engaged in a provocative activity. The nearby bodyguard is insurance against a violent reaction from some individual in the crowd. Additional insurance is also acquired by selecting a controlled environment for the provocative scene. For example, the most widely photographed locale when Oswald played the "agent provocateur" was at the entrance of the International Trade Mart, which was operated by Clay Shaw, a man who long since has been confirmed to have been a C.I.A. employee. For more information regarding Shaw see Chapter 6, THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF CLAY SHAW, and Chapter 8, THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS.

Most people in New Orleans did not know the name "Oswald" but in 1961 Thornley would not have been unaware of his former comrade at arms. Within the next year or so he would be writing the book about him -- well before he was made famous as the solitary killer of the President. However, Thornley was unable to recall using Oswald's name nor being at Bolton Ford.

In fact, Thornley did not recall many things about his stay in New Orleans from early 1961 until late November of 1963. He did recall staying for a brief period at an obscure lodging house called the McBeath Hotel on Napoleon Avenue. That place was no longer operational when the D.A.'s investigators arrived there, following Thornley's reference to it, but some of its old records remained. Among them, interestingly enough, was the registration of Lee H. Oswald in 1959, just before he sailed on the Lykes steamship (with a ticket purchased at Clay Shaw's International Trade Mart) for Europe.

Because of the implications of the Bolton Ford bid made under the name of Lee Oswald, the D.A.'s office located a copy of Thornley's driving license in California and compared his statistics with Oswald's. Between the two of them there was one inch difference in height and a few pounds difference in

weight.\* Obviously they were fairly close in appearance -- two very thin young men with almost exactly the same physical build, each with brown hair and similar facial features.

One very strange thing happened, however, when Kerry Thornley described his Marine comrade in 1964 during the course of his 33-page discourse on him. Warren Commission Counsel Jenner asked how tall Lee Oswald was and here is the colloquy which resulted:

Mr. Thornley: I would say he was about five-five maybe. I don't know.

Mr. Jenner: How tall are you?

Mr. Thornley: I am five ten.

Mr. Jenner: Was he shorter than you?

Mr. Thornley: Yes.<sup>49</sup>

But wait a minute! Oswald -- who was nearly six feet tall -- was the taller of the two. It would not be possible for Thornley to reverse such a fact in his mind. Why, then, was he describing his friend Lee as six inches shorter than he really was? Was he,

\*California driver's license #G86606, issued in 1968, indicated Thornley to be 5 feet 10 inches tall and 145 pounds in weight. Oswald was 5 feet 11 inches tall and approximately 150 pounds in weight. The sources of Oswald's measurements used by the D.A.'s office for the comparison were: his Selective Service Registration, his medical examination while still in the Marines and his passport.

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perhaps, fearful that someone might believe that he, Thornley, had been the young man who had been acting out the role of Lee Oswald in the early 1960's . . . . at Bolton Ford in New Orleans . . . then in Dallas. . . and then in Mexico in September . . . and then back in New Orleans. . . and then in Dallas again?

If it was anything much less than that, less horrendous and inadmissible, why wasn't the Warren Commission counsel saying anything to "refresh his recollection"? Everyone connected with the inquiry had to know by then that Oswald was 5 feet 11 inches tall.

Obviously, not enough people really cared -- rote was being chanted out to create the tableau of an extensive inquiry. Thornley easily could have said that Oswald was only three feet tall. Allen Dulles would have puffed on his pipe and grinned. The truth was that everything was really all over when the scapegoat was shot and put away in a box.\*

But for anyone who might still be interested in the facts, a careful reading of Thornley's testimony produces the acrid smell

\*The Dallas police, anxious to make at least a belated show of efficiency, seem to have been prompt in their recognition that the case was already over. After Oswald was shot they marked their one-page investigation of the President's murder with a rubber stamp: "Case closed."

of fraud on the part of men connected with the government -- a fraud never disowned, still bearing the imprimatur of the government after twenty years. Have you ever observed how intensely the Justice Department prosecutes fraud in the private sector? Here we have one of history's most gigantic frauds - one part of a giant constellation of fraud - on the part of the government itself. The loud silence from the Justice Department, since the Warren Commission edifice toppled and fell, remains deafening.

Did this star witness as to Lee Oswald's Communism in the Marines in California by any chance, happen to have met Guy Banister in New Orleans before the assassination? Yes, he replied to the New Orleans D.A.'s office. He had met Banister by accident. They had "discussed the book" inspired by Oswald, which Thornley was writing.

A curious group, the D.A.'s office asked another question. Had the government's star witness also met David Ferrie in New Orleans prior to the assassination? Well, yes again. He had met Ferrie also by accident. However, Thornley added, in a burst of cooperation, "I'm nearly sure that no significant conversation transpired."

Also, during Thornley's conversation with the New Orleans authorities, he was questioned about his travel schedule in 1963 when he went (by bus) to visit his parents in California. He explained that he had left New Orleans at the end of April and gone by way of Dallas, where he spent a few days visiting (the first few days of May). By strange coincidence, this was the very period during which photographs were taken - with Oswald's head rather clumsily superimposed on them - of a young man holding in one hand a Communist newspaper and in the other a rifle (needless to say, it is rather rare in the annals of assassination for the culprit to so obligingly provide incriminating evidence against himself in advance).

The photographs were taken in the backyard of the Neely Street apartment which the Oswalds had occupied in Dallas. They had moved out of it to New Orleans in early May, leaving a week's rent still paid for.

Either the Communist newspaper or the rifle would have been strong enough for a man soon to become a scapegoat - but the combination of the two leaves a fragrance which is too strong to be taken seriously. These "incriminating" photographs of the designated assassin would be found by Dallas police on the





afternoon of the assassination.<sup>50</sup>

Thornley had returned in September by way of Mexico City ("for many years I had wanted to visit Mexico City.")<sup>51</sup> Interestingly enough, this happened to be very close to the time that the Warren Commission said Oswald was in Mexico, allegedly contacting the Russian embassy and trying to get a visa from the Cuban embassy (so that he could go to Russia by way of Cuba, if you are ready for that one). Actually, Lee Oswald, himself, never contacted the Soviet Embassy nor the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City. As explained in more detail, later in THE MAN WHO WASN'T THERE, someone else was using his name, one more acting out of the role of the offensive Marxist dissident, one more contribution to the pre-assassination dis-creditation of the scapegoat.\*

Towards the end of his stay in New Orleans, by November 1963,

\*For example, Lee Oswald's communications with the Russian embassy were described in a C.I.A. memo dated prior to the assassination.<sup>52</sup> His "conversations" (consisting of the query, "this is Lee Oswald. Are there any messages for me?") invariably were followed by a negative response from the Embassy's switchboard operator, and were recorded by the C.I.A. After the President's murder, F.B.I. agents listening to the tape concluded, in a moment of uninformed candor, that the voice was not Oswald's.<sup>53</sup> This untrue pre-assassination Agency memo and the contrived "conversation" fairly should be recognized as early evidence demonstrating Agency participation in setting up the man who was to become the official patsy for the President's removal. See Chapter 9, THE MAN WHO WASN'T THERE for considerably more detail in this regard.



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Thornley was living at John Spencer's house -- about three or four blocks away from Clay Shaw. Spencer happened to be a friend of Shaw's and sometimes he visited Shaw and sometimes it was vice versa. However, both Clay Shaw and Spencer were in agreement that Shaw never came by while Thornley was staying at John Spencer's.

After spending nearly three years in New Orleans, Kerry Thornley suddenly left -- for good. Several days after the assassination, Spencer came to his house and found Thornley gone. There was a note from him in Spencer's mailbox saying, "I must leave. I am going to the Washington, D.C. area, probably Alexandria, Virginia. I will send you my address so that you can forward my mail."\* Spencer said it was quite unexpected because Thornley had at least ten days left in the month before his rent would have been due. He went to Thornley's apartment, which was apartment "C", and paper all over the place had been torn up into small pieces resembling confetti. Before being torn up the paper

\*This is an example of real coincidence. At the end of summer, Ruth Paine -- who subsequently got Lee Oswald his job at the now famous Texas School Book Depository -- had driven to Washington, D.C. to visit her brother-in-law (employed by the Agency for International Development, for all practical purposes an Agency subsidiary), then returned to New Orleans in September. Payne picked up Marina Oswald, the baby and the Oswald family belongings -- and drove them on to Dallas, where Lee Oswald was to join them. Now back in New Orleans, hardly had the gunshots in Dallas died out when Oswald's old Marine buddy also was seized with the urge to go to Washington.<sup>54</sup> But, in all fairness, it should be observed that the Washington area is very picturesque and the sudden desire to visit it can be impelling.

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had been watered down so that the ink had been blurred, making it unreadable.

Spencer said he had had some conversations with Thornley about his book "The Idle Warriors" and that Thornley had asked him to read a copy of the manuscript which had been turned down by several publishers before the assassination. He never did get around to reading it. After the assassination Thornley told him that he was going to be a rich man because of the coincidence of Oswald having been the subject of his book.<sup>55</sup>

The New Orleans D.A.'s office traced Thornley's path to the Washington area. It was found that indeed he had wound up at Arlington, a Washington suburb. He had moved into Shirlington House, a first-class apartment building, where he worked as doorman. Thornley stayed at Shirlington House until he testified before the Warren Commission. (That was a six-month stay in Washington. There are plays produced on Broadway with shorter rehearsal periods than that.) The D.A.'s office ascertained that, oddly enough, his salary was less than the rent of his Shirlington House apartment.<sup>56</sup>

Thornley sometime later sent a lengthy, almost biographical, affidavit to the New Orleans D.A.'s office describing, among other things, evidence which he had encountered of Nazi activity



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there in connection with President Kennedy's murder. Although it did not quite accord with reality in many respects, as the D.A.'s office saw it, it had one interesting feature. Purely gratuitously, it mentioned in brief detail how he and John Rosselli had happened to become friends after Thornley had left Washington and returned to California. The affidavit was mailed before Roselli's abrupt dispatchment to the hereafter, his early departure having been accomplished by dropping him in an oil drum into the ocean off the coast of Florida.

You may remember Rosselli, a racketeer of some renown. His name had surfaced during the Senate's investigation of the C.I.A.'s assassination practices. He was described as one of several men with underworld backgrounds who had worked for the Central Intelligence Agency in its efforts to accomplish the assassination of Fidel Castro.\* In fact, he had been one of a number of mobster types with whom the Agency had developed a relationship during its pre-Castro activities in Cuba.\*\* They

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\*See Chapter 12, THE HIDDEN SPONSOR, with regard to some of the Agency's specific assassination projects.

\*\*Rosselli's gambling proclivities in pre-Castro Cuba -- the site of numerous casinos -- later had made him useful to Howard Hughes, the eccentric billionaire, when he cast his covetous eyes on the twinkling world of the Las Vegas casinos. With Rosselli and his connections to ease the way, Hughes had moved into Vegas as only Howard Hughes could, buying up whatever caught his eye. It was while he was working for Hughes, and because of his background and gambling contacts in Cuba, that Rosselli was drafted by the C.I.A.



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would later prove to be valuable assets after Kennedy's elimination, because the Agency's dis-Information machinery was able to use their names to divert attention to the mob as a possible "sponsor" of the murder.\*

Rosselli's assignment by the Agency was to accomplish the assassination of Fidel Castro. In retrospect he seems not to have been as close-mouthed about his mission as the Agency would have liked. Rosselli initiated -- between 1960 and 1963 -- at least five attempts on Castro's life. When he later appeared before a Senate Committee investigating the assassination proclivities of the C.I.A., he testified that he was aware all along that his murder project was sponsored by the Agency.

Not long afterwards the remains of Mr. Rosselli -- shot in the stomach and bound in chains -- were found floating in an oil

\*See Chapter 13, THE SECRET SPONSOR, regarding the C.I.A.'s use of "false sponsors" following assassinations. A particularly blatant example of the fascination of federal investigations for false leads pointing away from the C.I.A. is epitomized in the 1978-1979 House Committee on assassination investigation. It featured an 1100 page volume of its hearings into Organized Crime - a very safe and popular target for the Congressmen to consider. The volume has about as much relevance to Kennedy's assassination as if it were a study of the religious rites of the Druids in early England. This was a clear case of the Congressmen being taken for a ride by someone at the top level of their investigative staff. See APPENDIX: The House Committee on Assassinations.

drum in Biscayne Bay. In accordance with official American etiquette for that period (when a murder victim happened to have been a potential witness to an assassination project) federal investigators were unable to find any leads to the perpetrators. This did not prevent the Justice Department from indicating that it thought the job was the work of organized crime. The C.I.A. said that it thought so, too.

It does not seem to have occurred to federal investigative authorities that the mob, which admittedly is not something our country can be very proud of, would not likely have been the unhappy party as the result of Rosselli admitting to the Senate that he had initiated assassination attempts for the C.I.A. Nor did anyone point out that at this time - when the Agency's dis-Information machinery was stentoriously featuring Organized Crime as a very probable sponsor of the assassination - it is not a very reasonable hypothesis that the mob would make such an overt effort to put its "signature" on the murder of a witness so directly connected to the assassination inquiry.\*

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\*A second mob figure, Sam Giancana (who also had done some business with the C.I.A. regarding Cuba) - was called to appear before the same committee - was killed shortly before his scheduled appearance. He was murdered with equal savagery, under circumstances also dramatically suggestive of a traditional organized crime execution. He was shot in his home eight times in his neck and his head by someone whom he admitted into the house. Those who conclude that Organized Crime would be so likely to also put its imprimatur on this scheduled Committee

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witness are free to do so. Some of the more curious might wish to read, in Chapter 12, THE SECRET SPONSOR, of the variety of brutal murder techniques developed by the C.I.A.



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Whether this indeed was an old fashioned sentimental gesture on the part of the "mob" or a clever example of what the Agency terms "damage control," someone seems to have gone to some trouble to produce a scenario reminiscent of the gangster days of yesteryear and Prohibition. In any case, in the course of becoming an acquaintance of John Rosselli in the middle Sixties, Kerry Thornley was not exactly becoming a friend of Joe Smith, Citizen. He had come a long way from his Marine days back at El Toro with his buddy, Lee Oswald.

A few months after his arrival in the Washington area, Thornley had occasion to write an acquaintance. In passing, he made a brief reference to the President's assassination:

"The whole thing was very interesting for awhile, the assassination, because -- on the surface -- there was good reason for the unenlightened SS [sic] and F.B.I. to suspect I might've had a hand in it. We had some polite conversations and finally, I guess, I was cleared. No word from them lately. I hope, though, my move to this area scared the piss out of 'em. Whether or not I'll be asked to put my 2¢ in at the Warren hearing, I don't know. Or care. When it is all over, though, I may yet go piss on JFK's grave, RIP."\*

One has to wonder at the whimsy of fate. With all due sympathy for Rosselli's tragic demise, the question arises: what was a nice kid like Kerry Thornley doing with a character like that?

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\* From a letter written by Kerry Thornley, Arlington, Virginia, to Philip Boatright, Omaha, Nebraska, February 8, 1964.<sup>57</sup>

test given to your basic soldier). His interrogator seems to have sensed the explosive potential of this information because he quickly added that Oswald had answered about as many questions wrong as he had correctly. With regard to a Russian examination, this is very much like saying that your dog is stupid because you can beat him playing chess three games out of five.

*I have already made clear my response to learning that Oswald had been given an examination in Russian. The implications of this unusual circumstance had grown even more provocative in view of Oswald's New Orleans activities. I took a closer look at the presentation.*

*RUS EXAM D*

~~This slip about the Russian examination is the beginning of the evidence indicating that earlier Oswald had been selected for intelligence work.~~ *That Oswald might have been selected for* This is not surprising inasmuch as he possessed the characteristics looked for in recruiting such employees:— he was from a military family (one brother in the Marines, one in the Air Force), he was very closemouthed by nature, he followed orders automatically and he was well above average in intelligence.\* The other Marines around Oswald had acquired the impression that he had "taught himself" Russian, unaware that the government had taught him.

*The likelihood of Oswald having*

~~His~~ having been picked for intelligence work while in the Marines is consistent with his assignment prior to the taking of the Russian examination at El Toro Marine Base in 1959. *TO ATSUGI* Previously, he had served in the Pacific at Atsugi Air Base — the ultra-secret base for all of the daily super-secret U-2 flights

\*Oswald's Intelligence Quotient ("I.Q.") was 118. This means that his intelligence had tested out, in approximate terms, as 18 points above the average I.Q.

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over China and that part of Asia. Oswald's anti-aircraft unit, highly classified with regard to security, had the specific assignment of guarding a U-2 hangar and was surrounded by a high, heavily wired Page fence. Even the arrival of the daily mail truck required that it be preceded by a sergeant on foot, equipped with the password for the day.<sup>17</sup> His service at Atsugi Air Base is probably best memorialized by two of the many Central Intelligence Agency documents concerning him which were classified as unavailable following the Warren Commission inquiry: CD 931 "Oswald's access to information about the U-2" and CD 692 "Reproduction of C.I.A. official dossier on Oswald."<sup>18</sup>

Another indication of the peculiar security status which Oswald had acquired in the Marines has been well concealed from casual view. The island of Quemoy, just off the mainland of communist China, was occupied by the nationalist Chinese - allies of the United States - but was within shelling distance of the red Chinese. Periodically, a crisis surfaced when Quemoy was shelled and threatened by possible invasion from the mainland. During one of these occasions Oswald was assigned to duty on Quemoy - but the assignment apparently was of a high security classification because it was not indicated anywhere in his service record made available to the Warren Commission.

This special mission was discovered later by a non-government investigator who undertook the laborious task of going through Oswald's payroll records and discovered the fact of his unlisted presence in Quemoy. Oswald was a trained specialist in radar and anti-aircraft operations and it would appear that this special assignment was in that connection. It is not known with any certitude, however, because the purpose of his special assignment has been kept secret.<sup>19</sup>

It was not long after taking the Russian examination at El Toro that Lee Oswald received his discharge from the Marines. Within two weeks he surfaced in Moscow where he ostentatiously announced that he had "defected" from the United States and remained for 30 months before returning. What is important to keep in mind is that it was only at this time in Moscow that the scenario of Oswald as a "Communist" - later to be so advantageous in making him the scapegoat for the assassination - began. However, the overwhelming weight of the evidence makes it clear that back in his Marine days - even while he was being taught Russian - he had not the slightest inclination towards Communism.

It is hard to avoid becoming curious about Kerry Thornley whose extravagant testimony differed so enormously from all the other Marines who served with Oswald. It mattered not how

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numerous and unanimous the others were about the total absence of Marxist leanings on Oswald's part -- it was Thornley's testimony which was grabbed and held high, for all to see, by the Warren Commission and the government, the incurious national press and the writers of obsequious books approving the official travesty.

Strangely enough, Nelson Delgado -- who had lived in the same barracks as Oswald and had known him much longer (and had "never heard Oswald say subversive things") -- was not even given the usual 72 hours' notice before being called to testify.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Thornley was given six months in advance, remaining in the Washington, D.C. area, while he prepared to testify for the government.

He arrived in Washington promptly after the assassination of the President and stayed there until his lengthy testimony for the Warren Commission in May of the following year. Whatever lay behind it, Thornley's testimony stands out as most singular -- almost as discordant as the government's triumphant and publicized seizure of it (in the face of the heavy weight of evidence to the contrary) as evidence that Lee Oswald was a dedicated Marxist revolutionary.

same time that the United States launched the Midas, the satellite observer missile, to overfly Russia on a regular basis. ~~24~~ With the satellite observer taking over and replacing the U-2 overflights, there would no longer have been any need for a ground observer to see whether or not visible contrails were left by hot airplane engines.\*

The Agency's name rarely appears on the record for anything it initiates which is in the slightest respect sensitive. For example, if it wants a man transferred from one place to another, it arranges behind the scenes for Bureau X to request Bureau Y to make the transfer. After the mission is accomplished, even though the Agency was its "sponsor"\*, there remains nothing on the record to show that any interest on its part ever existed.

This point is made because, in connection with Lee Oswald's trip to Russia and back, there is a pattern of government help for him rather than opposition to him. This is all the more unprecedented when such special solicitude is observed occurring after his incendiary announcement in Russia - at a press

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\*This is not intended as a probability estimate of Oswald's precise function while in the Soviet Union because insufficient data has been made available for such an estimate. It is, however, intended as an example of the fact that he was not without potential utility to the United States Intelligence Community.

\*\*Customary Intelligence Community terminology for the primary instigator or supporter of a mission.

conference which he called at his Moscow hotel - that he was "defecting" from the United States, that he believed in Marxism and that he not only was going to remain in Russia but that, because of his experience in radar, he was in possession of military secrets which he was going to turn over to the Soviet government.

As this dramatic defection hit the world media, the F.B.I. duly picked it up. The Bureau, after making a study of Oswald's Marine Corps files, stated that "no derogatory information was contained in the U.S.M.C. files concerning Oswald." ~~26~~ The Bureau further was informed that the Office of Naval Intelligence contemplated no action against him in the matter. ~~26~~ Concerning the F.B.I.'s failure to investigate the Oswald "defection" any farther, J. Edgar Hoover later stated that the American Embassy in Moscow had given Oswald a "clean bill." ~~27~~

A close study of the record reveals that - after his 30 month sojourn in Russia was over - Oswald once again received the same peculiarly preferential treatment from the United States government with regard to his return to the United States. The special treatment did not extrude. Its profile was sufficiently low so as not to catch the eyes of the media. But it was there.

It is noteworthy, for example, that when Lee Oswald prepared to return from Russia the State Department approved his return (it could have opposed his return as a defector).<sup>\*</sup> It authorized the American Embassy in Moscow to lend him the money (in behalf of State) for his return.~~29~~ It is also noteworthy that a State Department regulation provides that such a repatriation loan cannot be made unless "loyalty to the United States beyond question" has been established with regard to the recipient.<sup>30</sup> The State Department's Passport Office found "no reason" why his passport should not be renewed<sup>\*\*</sup> and the Department authorized the American Embassy to renew it.~~31~~ (In fact subsequently, in 1963, when he applied for his passport again, he received it within 24 hours~~32~~ - a circumstance which would have been utterly impossible had his "defection" to Russia been genuine).

This governmental pattern demonstrating almost paternal solicitude for Lee Oswald's welfare -- following his fiery "defection" in Moscow, and, 30 months later, following his return

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<sup>\*</sup>The Department's report stated that it had determined that Oswald "had not expatriated himself" by his actions upon arriving in Russia in 1961. It added that there was no indication in the reports on Oswald sent to the Department by the F.B.I. that Oswald was a communist.~~28~~

<sup>\*\*</sup>Ordinarily, when an American citizen goes abroad and commits an act indicating allegiance to another country (such as the Soviet Union) the Passport Office automatically prepares a "lookout" card to catch its attention in the event the party ever attempts to review his passport. In Oswald's case, no such "lookout" card ever was prepared. Like the American Embassy, the Passport Office gave Oswald a "clean bill of health."



to the United States - is quite perceptible, upon close analysis, to one even unconnected with the government. ~~The governmental sponsors of the assassination, consequently, must have been acutely conscious of it.~~

This would seem to explain their felt need, which otherwise would have been redundant and unnecessary, to backdate his apparent Marxism all the way to El Toro Marine Base in 1959 - a remarkable feat which was accomplished by producing a witness to testify before the members of the Warren Commission concerning his radical tendencies even back then. This crucial stain (which had the effect of inferring that the Russian adventure was but a continuation of a deep seated radical dementia, rather than a possible government mission assigned to him) was held up high for the media to see by its presentation before the Commission itself. This darkly incriminating testimony was printed in Volume XI of the hearings.

On the other hand, the other Marines, who had served more closely with Oswald and had known him longer in the Marines, unanimously testified that they never had observed any radical tendencies whatsoever (Oswald "never said subversive things"... "He would discuss his ideas but not anything against

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our Government or -- nothing Socialist, mind you"... "I never heard him in any way, shape or form confess that he was a Communist, or that he ever thought about being a Communist"... "I never heard Oswald make any anti-American or pro-Communist statements"... "Oswald never gave me any indication of favoring Communism or opposing capitalism"... "I do not recall any remarks on his part concerning Communism, Russia or Cuba"... are some of the examples cited earlier herein of the consensus of his former Marine associates). This material, consisting of depositions and affidavits - in contrast to the inciting and incriminating testimony presented openly before the members of the Commission - was bunched in a separate volume of the Warren Report from Thornley's testimony and it appears unlikely that most, if any, of the Commission members ever saw it.

Oswald was met on his arrival in New York not by the F.B.I. nor any other law enforcement agencies but by Spas T. Raikin, who was the secretary-general of the American Friends of the Anti-Bolshevik Nations, Inc., an anti-Communist operation with extensive intelligence connections. No effort ever was made by the government to prosecute Oswald for his alleged defection. To the contrary, as will be seen in the following chapter, when he ultimately moved from Fort Worth to Dallas he was received with open arms by the ferociously anti-communist White Russian



community in Dallas and by the United States government, as well. Pending more detailed consideration in the following chapter, a single incident will suffice here as an illustration.

Learning the real status of a defector - who later became a re-defector - can be relatively simple. Simply find out what their standing is with the local F.B.I. office. The Bureau, whose agents are trained to sniff out a Communist a thousand yards away, does not equivocate on that subject.

Of the number of Dallas anti-communist Russians welcoming the Oswalds, only Anna and Teofil Meller had any serious reservations about the couple. This was because Anna, while visiting the Oswald's apartment, had seen a copy of Karl Marx' "Das Kapital" on a table. She seems to have been unaware of it but Teofil, her husband, later called the Bureau and reported the fact. He was informed by the Bureau's spokesman that Oswald was alright.

This information was obtained from a Dallas police investigative report dated February 17, 1964, captioned "Teofil Meller."\* How one might ask, was the fact that on this occasion the Bureau regarded Oswald as "alright" handled by the Warren Commission - considering that the latter by that date had begun

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\*It was obtained by researcher Harold Weisberg, one of the most indefatigable critics of the "official solution". See his book, Whitewash II (New York, Dell, 1966), pp. 45-50.

its project of converting Oswald into a reptile more deadly than the King Cobra?

The Warren Commission handled this problem with its usual élan. It simply did not call Teofil Meller as a witness - nor even ask him for an affidavit.

In view of such an accumulation of considerable anomalies, one is tempted to want to examine Oswald's income tax for the period in question in order to see if income was reported by him from the C.I.A., Naval Intelligence or a related government bureau. Unfortunately for that thought, Oswald's income tax for the relevant time period has been classified as secret.<sup>32</sup> Lee Oswald is probably the only lonely, itinerant drifter in the history of the human race to have his income tax return classified as secret for reasons of national security.

~~The next chapter will demonstrate in particular - and following chapters will reinforce - that Oswald's treatment,~~  
following his return, both by the Intelligence Community and by dedicated anti-Communist individuals unquestionably supports the conclusion that in Russia he had been engaged in a government intelligence clandestine mission (as his mother attempted to

inform federal officials in vain as far back as 1961<sup>34</sup>). The facts support the conclusion that Oswald actually was anything but a real defector. It follows that a number of men high in the American Intelligence Community, despite their silence since, necessarily would have been well aware of this.

In any case, those same individuals therefore would know, as well, of the uniqueness of a young American who had branded himself a dissident Marxist in the eyes of the world and who ultimately would be returning to the United States, where he necessarily would continue to be responsive to their orders.

Oswald would return to Texas in 1962, leaving in the summer of 1963 to spend the summer in New Orleans. There he would be "sheep dipped"\* - under the cold <sup>blue</sup> eyes of Guy Banister, the former

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\*"Sheep dipped" is intelligence terminology for placing an individual in a form of activity which will condition him in a particular way in the public eye. In 1962, following his return to Russia, Oswald had been surrounded by markedly anti-Communist Russian exiles in Dallas so that, with the assassination coming up later in 1963, it was necessary to cause him to go through some "refresher" motions (e.g. handing out pro-Castro leaflets on the street in front of news photographers, who had been called beforehand) so that the public could be reminded, at the proper time, that he was a trouble maker who had once "defected" to Russia. It would not have been difficult for the older men around him in New Orleans to induce him to such action by convincing him that he was helping to "penetrate" the pro-Castro group (which actually had no members in New Orleans) known as "Fair Play for Cuba," headquarters which was in New York.

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